

Poetics to Political Transformation-Dalit Women Writings

P. SIVAKAMI

(Dartmouth College, USA)

Introduction:

What is the relationship between literature and politics? What are the governing principles of literature? Why should politics form part of literature? These questions had surfaced in the past and created controversies among writers and literary critics especially when the Marxian ideology based literature arrived in large numbers. Similarly the post Second World War era witnessed controversies between Postmodern and Marxist literary groups. They were essentially ideological controversies rather than literary discourses. Because society by itself gets defined by its political ideology it is inevitable for literature to stay away from the happenings in the society.

As a creative writer, I was invited to address in a workshop organized by Neidal (The coastal land and people), a literary forum of young writers belonging to fishing community. When I was introduced to them by Professor Vedasagayam, a leading literary critic in Tamil, he remarked, “Here is a lady who had written the first Dalit novel in the 1980s and by the year 2000, Tamil Nadu witnesses the emergence of a Dalit political party bargaining for its due share of power. Such is the connection between literature and politics”.

It is also to be remembered here that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar started his political career with publication of a journal by name Mooknayak (The leader of the Speechless) in Marathi language. We have ample examples proving the strong ties between literature and socio political changes. Literary works are reflections and commentaries on society and its different cultural, economic and political manifestations. As they are written from the spectrum of writers’ individual and collective experiences, scholarship, vision, and their understanding of the society and the world as a whole, the politics governing them naturally get discussed in their works. Moreover, literature as a discipline depends largely on history, geography,

sociology, psychology, anthropology and politics to draw its sources. Therefore it is necessary to take cognizance of the influence of all these disciplines over literature.

However, the very word politics, when associated with literature, discredits the latter from among the literary critics and common readers alike and it only shows how the layman's understanding of the term politics as a dirty power game has been bought by others too. Fictions carrying political ideologies are generally brought down by critics, especially from the contrary camps on the grounds of aesthetics. Whatever be the content or the core ideology, most literary critics are of the opinion that a literary work should be written aesthetically. Thus we find that the nature of literary criticism has undergone many changes and currently it has anchored on literary aesthetics as a measuring yard to assess the merit of a literary creation.

Aesthetics is somewhat an abstract term and appears to be elusive to any qualifying parameters. Any attempt to set standards will be futile as new fields of knowledge and their unique experiences emerge constantly. In the absence of any measurable standards, the critics tend to quote examples or to set models. This process has led them to assign labels to their favorite works as "ever green" or "best seller". There is no denial of the contributions of such labeled works towards literature in terms of its historical importance, contemporary relevance, lingua franca, conceptual framework and aesthetic execution. At the same time the institutional support, handsome endowments, scholarly perseverance and academic endeavor in promoting such works to retain their evergreen status are also worth examining. But the point here is that even such labeled works cannot be taken as benchmarks for determining another work of art.

To sum up, I would like to mention that in the absence of any fruitful theories or arguments against literature's engagement with politics and on governing principles of literary aesthetics, every work of art will have to stand on its own strength when it is read with the individual reader's realms of affairs and individual/collective experiences.

With the above brief but relevant introduction, in this essay, I would like to bring out the following issues concerning Dalit literature: namely, the transformation from untouchable to

Dalit, the current status of Dalits, the salient features of Dalit literature, Dalit women writings and their political consequences.

Untouchable to Dalit, Their Present Status:

Untouchability is a unique form of social exclusion practiced in India for more than one thousand years. It is an outcome of a social and economic structure based on caste. Permanency to this caste structure was systematically achieved by according religious sanction through Hindu religious scriptures and abstaining from inter-caste marriage. With the advent of Brahminical religious hegemony, what was originally a varna (color) system based on division of labor deteriorated as a caste system (based on birth). As the Dalits were never part of the fourfold (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and the Sudras) system of caste, they were treated as outcasts.

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar and Pandit Ayothi Dasar are of the opinion that the Dalits could be the ancient Buddhists who scrupulously opposed the supremacy of the Brahmins and the caste system. Tracing the origin of untouchability, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar attributed it to the rise of Brahmanical religion under the royal patronage of the Gupta emperors and the steady decline of Buddhism owing to internal factions and lack of royal and public support. As a result of the religious and political developments, the followers of Buddhism were gradually marginalized and condemned as untouchables.

The coinage of the word “ Dalit “ by the Dalits themselves in the later half of the twentieth century implies the assertion of their rights and their revolutionary struggle under the leadership of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (who is commonly known as the father of the Indian Constitution) against the inhuman practice of untouchability. The Indian Constitution is enshrined on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity and affirms Dalits equal opportunities through reservation. But when atrocities were continued against them and economic and labor exploitation inbuilt in the basic feudal structure remained unaltered; the constitutional remedies proved to be far too inadequate. Even after seventy years of independence, untouchability is widely prevalent as the caste Hindus are actively promoting it.

Segregation of Dalit habitations, atrocities against Dalits, violence and nefarious killings of Dalits, rape and murder of Dalit women, arson, denial of access to common property resources, misuse of power and authority against the Dalits, ill-treatment of farm and household labor, engaging child and bonded (slave) labor, use of abusive language, adverse propaganda against Dalits and against inter caste marriage in popular media are some of the common practices of untouchability followed by the caste Hindus in modern India. The Caste-State nexus can be easily witnessed by the distorted and halfhearted policies of the government in agriculture, land reform, failure in proper implementation of special component plan meant for the empowerment of Dalits and the poor implementation of Protection of Civil Rights Act and The Prevention of Atrocities Act which are meant to provide safety to the Dalits and rehabilitate the lives of the victims of caste atrocities.

Under these present circumstances, Dalit women who are placed at the lowest in the caste ridden patriarchy seem to bear all the burdens. They are not only oppressed on account of their caste and poverty but also on the basis of their gender. The majority of the rural Dalits are landless agricultural laborers and depend on the dominant caste land holders for their livelihood. Further, as the Dalit villages lack basic amenities, they are literally thrown at the mercy of the caste Hindus even to avail the state provided facilities. A study of Human Security Issues of Dalit Women in India, by Win G India Network- 2013 points out that 91% of Dalit households in the rural area are either landless or operate what are termed as sub marginal or marginal holdings; 90% of women working in the unorganized sector are mainly from lower castes; Less than 10% Dalit households have safe drinking water; More than 80% of Dalit women in the reproductive age group (15 to 45) are anemic; According to National Commission for Scheduled Castes, approximately 75% of the girls drop out of primary school despite the efforts of Government of India which hold reservation for Dalit children; More than 70% of currently enrolled children in school from Dalit families are first generation learners. The above data are explicit on the deplorable condition of Dalit women.

Salient features of Dalit Literature:

Directionally speaking, there are two distinct set of writings that characterize modern Tamil literature. One is literature of the dominants and the other is that of the Dalits. The subaltern, Dalit literature is sometimes featured as counter writing in academic circles. Though the term counter writing is used as it subverts the attempts of others in imposing their cultural practices over the Dalits, Dalit literature is chiefly an effort towards conscious construction of casteless society based on modern liberal values. It exhibits and expresses dissent over the oppressive social structure, advocating the emancipation of Dalits and the subalterns. Further, Dalit literature draws inspiration from Dalit epistemology, which is based on the historical struggle and the life conditions of Dalits. At times, deconstructing the literature of the dominants is considered necessary only to make them and the readers realize how caste has permeated into the literary texts and in the very fabric of Indian languages in several ways.

Deconstruction of ancient Tamil literature, counter writing and rewriting were attempted even in the early 19th century by Pandit Ayothi Dasar. But his writings were brought to light only in the beginning of 21st century. Recently this tradition has been to an extent continued by Prof. Raj Gowthaman a writer and a critic.

Dalit literature differs from others in many ways. To begin with, the very perception of society and the categorization of people in a vertical hierarchy are the points of difference between them. Even if both agree to its unethical continuance there are disagreements on the notion of its origin and the reasons for its perpetration and the remedies against its practice. The mainstream writers of different kinds guided by the Hindu religious scripts, Gandhian thoughts, Marxist philosophy, Periyarism, etc. have not paid much attention to the problems of Dalits. Even if they did their approach to those problems is distorted and disoriented. Few examples are necessary at this stage.

Prem Chand is considered as the father of Indian short stories. 'Kafan' is one of his famous short stories woven around three Dalit characters. In this story, the author had let loose his imagination in reading the minds of his characters and their aspirations. The Dalit father and his son are busy roasting the stolen potatoes from neighbors' fields in the fire that they have

created in front of their lowly hut, while the daughter in law moans and wails in labor pain inside the hut. The son is reluctant to go in and attend to her as he thinks the father will eat away all the potatoes in his absence. But he tells his father that he does not know anything about labor pain and child birth and he suggests his father to go in and attend to her. Father refuses for the same reason as the son's but says that he has not even seen the face of daughter in law as her face is always covered behind a veil and it is delicate for him to go in at this juncture. Thus they allow the daughter in law to die. Thereafter they go to the village of caste men to collect some money for her burial. There are some good samaritans in the village who give the money. Instead of going home, without a word spoken between them, they both go to the toddy shop and drink to the brim. Then they fall flat on the ground. Gazing at the stars they thank the dead soul for filling their stomachs full.

The above story reveals the author's perception of Dalit life and the characteristics of the Dalit people in the story. While the caste names of the Dalits are mentioned by him, he conveniently refrains from mentioning the names of the benevolent masters for reasons unknown. It appears that the binary of feudal structure is misconceived by the author. The landed gentry and the landless poor are equated to be benevolent master and lazy petty thieves respectively. The story is an unparalleled imagination in several respects. The readers are compelled to assume many things on their own. For example, as per the story there is only one Dalit family in the entire village. There are no neighbors to help the poor suffering woman. The Dalit village is located far away that no women of caste can hear her and even if they hear they may not come to her help. The poverty of the Dalits is their own making and nobody is responsible for it. If only they are hardworking and stop consuming toddy they would be like anyone else in the village. There are some good people among the caste men in the village but the Dalits do not deserve their sympathy.

Another example from Tamil novel *Kurudhipunal* (Bloodstream) by Indra Parthasarathy is worth discussing here. This novel was based on the horrendous Kilvenmani (a village in Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu) massacre on 25th December 1968 in which 44 Dalits including women and children were burnt alive. The protesting Dalits for a wage rise for their agriculture labor when chased by the henchmen of the landlord Gopalakrishna Naidu took

refuge in a small house. The house was locked from outside and was set on fire by the henchmen. But Indra Parthasarathy, in his novel, distorts the real incident and attributes this atrocity to the sexual perversion of Gopalakrishna Naidu undermining the pitiable conditions of feudal farm labourers and the importance of Dalits' united struggle for better wage conditions.

Madhavayya, one of the early writers in Tamil was of the opinion that some people are born as Pariahs because of their sins committed in the past and their salvation lies in their next birth. Similarly many writers are of the opinion that population explosion is chiefly responsible for poverty in India and prevalence of large scale corruption is due to general moral degradation in the society. Dalit writers on the contrary believe that absence of land reforms coupled with illiteracy are responsible for the induced poverty in India and unfair distribution of wealth based on caste is the root cause for corruption.

Pudhumaipithan, a celebrity among short story writers in Tamil, in one of his short stories describes the sexual molestation of a Dalit maid by his employer as an act of benevolence towards her i.e. she should consider herself to be lucky to be touched by caste master. Prof. Raj Gowthaman in his article presented during the World Tamil Conference 1995 had brought out at length the attitude of several mainstream writers towards Dalits through their writings in Tamil.

Many of the mainstream writers seem to be comfortable with their caste status and that of the protagonists that they have created. This is visible in the way in which they use the language in their literary works. In Tamil the syllable equivalent to "R" is used at the end of the word as a mark of respect to the person and "N" is used to mark disrespect. Most writers used "R" for their caste characters and "N" for their Dalit characters.

Reservation is a much discussed topic among the common public in India. This was in the context of constitutional provisions for affirming equal representation proportionate to the population of the Dalit, the tribal communities in education, employment and political representations. In all such discussions in the media the right wing mainstream intellectuals put forth arguments against reservation and insist on a merit based selection method. But they conspicuously refrain from emphasizing land reforms or Dalits' access to sources of

livelihood and common property resources as alternatives for reservation. Therefore in the absence of land reforms, empowering the Dalits with cultivable lands the responsibility of upholding the system of reservation automatically becomes the responsibility of the Dalit writers.

As the Dalits depend largely on the corrupt government and their agencies unlike the others for their livelihood, education and employment, their literary engagements are compelled to circle around those power structures as orphans. They have a lot of complaints against the very structuring and functioning of the government which make their writings political.

Thus we find Dalit literature in many ways stands unique in terms of its content, concept, characterization, aesthetics and the use of language. It is not merely a passive account of Dalithood demanding the sympathy of others but a lively engagement evoking the attention of the readers to the much neglected social change and modernity.

Dalit Women writing leading to Political Transformation:

There are more number of women autobiographers in Marathi language. Shantabai Kamble (Kaleidoscopic story of my life), Urmila Pawar (The Weave of my life), Babytai Kamble (Prisons we broke), and Kumud Pawade (Thoughtful outburst) had written their autobiographies in the 1980s. P. Sivakami (1986), Bama (1992), Sugirtharani (2000), Ku. Umadevi (2010) started writing in the Tamil language a little later. Bama has written her autobiography in Tamil though she has tried other literary genres. Vigil Chirappad (A home without a kitchen 2006), from Kerala, Gogu Shyamala (Father may be an elephant and mother only a small basket 2012) are notable writers in Malayalam and Telugu languages respectively. In terms of the number of books written, Tamil records the highest so far. Moreover, apart from autobiographies, quite a number of novels, short stories, critical essays and poetries are written in Tamil when compared to other south Indian languages.

The emergence of Dalit women writings is an outcome of their education and awareness created by the Dalit movements. Education and exposure to conditions in the work place and outside the family made them conscious of their caste status and this awareness found expression in their literary works. Though there may be many Dalit women engaged in

writing, for the purpose of this essay a brief account of at least few of the early writers' profiles are considered necessary to trace their inspiration to write.

Shantabai was born in a Mahar family in Maharashtra. She was not allowed inside the class and therefore sat outside the class and studied. After marriage she continued her studies and completed teacher training course. She was a well-known activist and on the lines of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar she embraced Buddhism.

Urmila Pawar was also born in a Mahar family in Maharashtra. Her family and ancestors were traditional bamboo basket weavers. She grew up in poverty and managed to complete her post-graduation in Marathi literature. She was a government employee. She was twelve years old when she was converted to Buddhism during the mass conversion in 1956 under the leadership of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

Gogu Shyamala was born in a small village in Telangana State. Her parents were farmers and only she could get education among the three siblings in the family. Currently she is employed as a senior fellow in a government research institute.

Bama was born in a Dalit Christian family and became a nun after her education. After seven years of her humiliating life at the convent she came out of the institution to become a teacher. Her first work was an autobiography of her childhood as well as her life as a nun.

Vijila Chirappad, born at Perambara in Kozhikode in an average Dalit family, recalling her initial struggles, she says: "You see publishing in itself is an arduous process. And since I am not even an adopted child of the mainstream society, you can guess how hard it has been for me. Yet not even once I think of giving up."

Almost all Dalit women writers share common experiences of caste atrocities, poverty, and discrimination at work places; subordination and domination by others and they are marked for their hard work towards their present status amidst male domination in their families and outside their families.

What are the special features of their writings? In the autobiographies of Baby Kamble, Urmila Pawar, Bama and in the biography of Veeramma, the readers find overwhelming distress accounts of the life of untouchables. These autobiographies are notable in many respects. First of all, they are written with so much of self-esteem even though the contents

in their works are capable of shocking or disgusting any reader worth his/her conscience. Secondly the explicit hatred towards caste system as demonstrated in their writings exhibit their courage to stand up in protest against the caste majority. Thirdly these writings never followed any laid down principles governing literary aesthetics of the dominants' literature. The content and the language used in those works were so powerful like a ravenous flowing river after heavy rains. Fourthly they evinced two different reactions among two different readers; to the Dalit readers it was like a call for self-awakening and self-realization and to the caste Hindus it was like a warning necessitating introspection and change. Fifthly they directly as well as indirectly announced to the world that Dalits would not be passive onlookers to the evils of caste ridden Indian society and they in solidarity would fight tooth and nail to establish a just society on the lines of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and on what has been envisioned in the Constitution. Lastly, there were faint indications demanding the attention of Dalits towards Buddhist values following the footsteps of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. And some of them had set examples by their own conversion to Buddhism. All the autobiographers have critiqued not just the caste system but also its parent institution- Hinduism .

Dalit women writing exposed Dalit patriarchy and the male oriented politics mercilessly. P.Sivakami' s “ The Grip of Change “ and “The Taming of Women “ are very good examples. Similarly while describing casteism Urmila Pawar and Bama in their works they always link it to patriarchy. Domestic violence or women beating, males addiction to alcoholism and other forms of female oppressions are regularly featured in their works.

One important aspect of Dalit women writings is its direct impact on the feminist movement in India. It had created broad minded intellectuals among non-Dalit women. The Dalit women writings and autonomous Dalit women voices led the feminist world to a new understanding. Prof. Gopal Guru (Dalit women Speak Differently), P. Sivakami (Body politics, Women and politics -in Tamil),Uma Chakravarti (Gendering Caste), and Sharmila Rege (Dalit women talk differently- A critique difference and towards a Dalit feminist standpoint position) are some of the important exponents of the Dalit feminist theory.

While the feminists and feminist critics had a narrow approach to feminism limiting its scope to only patriarchy and the class system, Dalit women writings expanded not only its

ambit to encompass the multiple women identities but also gave a new definition and explanation to Indian feminism. According to Uma Chakravarti, “Class, Caste and Gender are inextricably linked, they interact with and shape each other, the structure of marriage, sexuality and reproduction is the fundamental basis of caste system” She again says, “It is also fundamental to the way inequality is sustained, the structure of marriage reproduces both class and caste inequality and thus the entire production system through its tightly controlled system of reproduction.”

The new awakening was carried through the length and breadth of the country by Dalit women writers and Dalit women movements in each State. Articles were written in local languages in Dalit media and a number of seminars and workshops were arranged. Noteworthy Dalit publications in Tamil are Pudhiya Kodangi, Dalit Murasu, Ezhucchi, The Dalit, Kalam and Bodhi. There were other irregular Dalit periodicals and newsletters which also carried articles on Dalit Feminism. Some of us were fortunate to get opportunities in popular media. There were literary exchanges between different states through national Dalit networks on this subject. To name a few: National Federation of Dalit Women (Ruth Manorama), Women’s Front (P. Sivakami), Dalit Women Movement (Bernard Fatima), Center for Alternative Dalit Media (Rajni Tilak), Dalit women Association (Chhaya Khobragade) and Dalit Panchayat (Jothi Raj) worked on this concept in close contact with each other though they were located in different States of India.

While the mainstream feminist movements at the field level viewed Dalit feminism as a separate category, Dalit women on the contrary believed in Dalit feminism’s potential to reach out to all categories of women including women from the mainstream. And as partners in the shared destiny they expected all women to join hands in their fight against casteism. That did not happen. Instead Dalit women’s activities were considered as ambitious advocacies for leadership. In the process Dalit women started questioning the political efficacy of the mainstream feminist movements in their fight against patriarchy and also expressed their suspicion as to how women can remain or form part of caste oppressors' clans and at the same time revolt against patriarchy. Dalit feminists went one step ahead and suggested to others that if Dalit feminism is more an appropriate concept why not all women

accept it and lead others to liberation. Knowing well their caste privileges, deep rooted cultural practices and economic comfort level which are capable of corrupting even fair thinking persons, no mainstream feminist movement was expected to come forward to accept this proposal or for negotiating coalitions on this pattern.

However as far as Dalit women are concerned, the Dalit women writings coupled with activism have had far reaching impact on them. Primarily, Dalit women activists were strengthened in handling cases of atrocities and violence against Dalit women effectively. Dalit women associations and cultural organizations sprang up in major cities and in government institutions. Though their arrival created a split in the existing mainstream women organizations but they were helpless in stopping them as the existing ones failed to voice the grievances of Dalit women employees. Moreover, when it comes to sharing of power and importance in an organization it was natural for them to ignore the interests of Dalit women. The failure of existing women associations was thus exposed with the formation of Dalit women associations.

In the case of atrocities and violence, mainstream women organizations generally follow a differential attitude towards Dalit women. A concrete example is evident from the comparison of two notorious cases of rape and murder: namely the case of Seureka (Dalit) of Kheyerlanji village Maharashtra and that of Nirbhaya (so called upper caste) from Delhi. The politically dominant Kunbi caste paraded naked Surekha and her family members in the street on September 29, 2006 over a land dispute, sexually abused them and cruelly murdered them. The media coverage was weak, though Dalit men and women activists were protesting and only after Sabrina Buckwalter from USA wrote an article in The Times of India, the media gave coverage of the massacre. Nirbhaya was gang raped in the running bus in New Delhi on 16th December 2012 and subsequently died at the hospital in Singapore. The incident instantly pulled the angry mob (mostly women) to the main roads of Delhi blocking the entire traffic. Immediately all women movements and political leaders irrespective of caste condemned it in all possible ways. Special law was enacted soon after this incident.

In the absence of active support of the feminist movements towards Dalits and Dalit women cause, the Dalit women organizations viewed feminists' campaign for 33%

reservation for women in the assembly and the parliament with suspicion. The BSP chief Mayawati was in favor of reservation for women but insisted an additional and separate quota for Dalit women apart from the provision of reservation for Scheduled castes in the constitution. The political parties of Backward castes in the north of India like the RJD (Rashtriya Janata Dal), JD (U) (Janata Dal United) and Samajwadi Party though welcomed the move, opposed the Bill on the ground that there should be a quota for Backward class women. The rebel party leader (from the Congress) Sharat Yadav withdrew support to the Bill on the score that it should empower the poor and backward women. The mainstream women movements instead of accepting oppositions' conditional support or explaining the modalities of inclusion and Bill's potential benefits for all women, they viewed their proposal as a move to stop the Bill and an evil design of patriarchy. Therefore though the Bill was approved in Rajya Sabha of the parliament in 2010, it could not be passed in the Lok Sabha. All these developments go to prove among other adverse effects, the ability of Dalit women to negotiate political power with the dominants on equal footing.

In this essay, to assess the specific and direct impact of Dalit women writing, writings from Tamil have been selected for the simple reasons that as already stated, only in Tamil a large number of works are created and there are no published and translated articles available in other languages regarding their impact on polity and society. As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, apart from Dalit women empowerment, the writings of Bama, Sugirtarani and Sivakami led to several changes in the cultural sphere and in government administration. Bama portrayed women's ability to stay independent of mainstream's exploitative culture and their spirituality and to find happiness in very many small ways of their community life and struggle. This is something unique to Tamil literature and culture. Similarly, Sugitarani is known for her engagement on women's sexuality and its myths in Tamil society besides her excellent Dalit poems. Both the above writers have written a number of books and they deserve separate examinations at length. P. Sivakami's journey from writer to politics is another story by itself. She has written a number of books on caste and gender in all genres namely novel, short story, poetry and prose. Her publication, a monthly magazine by name Pudhiya Kodangi and her involvements in Dalit land right movement, South India writers

and Artists' literary forum, National Dalit and Adhivasi land right movement and International school of Dalit studies also need elaborate study. In 2009 she started a political party by name Samuga Samatua Padai (Party for Social Equality) and the party's activities were widely recognized and she was invited for an alliance by DMK in 2016 State Election in Tamil Nadu.

The literature on Dalit land rights led to the formation of Dalit Land Right Movement in Tamil Nadu. Their activities compelled the DMK party to launch a free land distribution scheme to the poor in the year 2006. And what is interesting is that every political party in Tamil Nadu was compelled to talk about land which was a rare phenomenon in the political history of Tamil Nadu in the last 50 years. The Dalit Land Right Movement (P. Sivakami), followed by the efforts of VCK (Political Party led by Thirumavalavan) were primarily responsible for the announcement of the land distribution policy of the government. Fr. Marku's book on 'Panchami Land', Anandi's 'Land to Dalits', P. Sivakami's 'Dalit Land Right Struggle' are some of the important literature on the subject. Subsequently the same DMK government in the year 2011, appointed a commission to retrieve the panchami lands (land assigned to the Dalits by British between 1910 and 1930) which were illegally usurped by the caste Hindus and others.

P. Sivakami's article on 'Separate Budget for the Dalits in 2007' coupled by her activism and support by Christudas Gandhi IAS and others resulted in an open acceptance of the deficiencies in the financial allocation to the welfare of the Dalits in the past by the government and its declaration of increased allocation rectifying earlier deficiencies.

After much struggle by Dalit women writers, Sahitya Akademi (National Academy of Letters) agreed to hold literary workshops and seminars for Dalit writers.

It is not only P. Sivakami, invariably for almost all Dalits both women and men engaged in creative writing, literature is not an end by itself but a process to create a better world for the humanity. Most often a literary career for a Dalit means an indefinite struggle for democracy and human values.

Readings:

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- 6) Dalit Panpaadu (Dalit Culture) By-Raj Gowthaman 1993